/151 cont'd/

764 form: After incinerating their dead according to Lamaist rites, they gather the remains in a chest ad hoc, and bury them provisionally in a clean, dry place on the slope of a mountain. At the ts'in-ming /ch'ing ming/, the festival of the dead among the Chinese, they disinter the chest to bury it for good in the common cemetery of the clan. This custom is followed even by the T'ou-jen who live beside the cemetery. This practice which the T'ou-jen claim to have been general in the old times nowadays is already no longer seen nowadays in many places.

2. Relations of the Maternal Uncle with the Family of his Sister and her Children

604 Another basic element of the matriarchate is the particular situation which the maternal uncle occupies in this organization where all the rights of the family seem to belong to him.

a) Right of life and death over his sister's children.

[761] Now, even today, among the T'ou-jen the maternal uncle has kept the most important rights over his sister's children; he has even kept the right of life and death over them. Elsewhere I shall describe three true-to-life happenings where one sees the maternal uncle preside over a family council in which, without any subsequent form of trial and without the intervention of the law or the courts, he decides that /152/ his sister's son will be buried alive. Now without the consent of the maternal uncle nobody would dare to make such a decree; no member of the family would dare take upon himself such a responsibility, not even the grandfather, although we are in the patriarchal period. These facts are all the more strange since capital punishment is not even within the jurisdiction of the head t'ou-se.

In its place I shall quote with all the circumstances the case of two brothers who in the lifetime of their widowed mother indirectly caused the suicide of their brother, a rogue of the worst kind, whom they had shut up in a room after beating him; the scamp hung himself. Now, for causing their brother's death, they had to pay an indemnity to their maternal uncle, the master of the bones of his

4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

presented to the Living Buddha with the scarf. It is the gift for outstanding persons. Then the master of ceremonies makes his traditional speech. After having thanked the Living Buddha, he starts his usual speech of apology: "We are ashamed to have treated the holy man so irreverently, the meat we prepared was tough and tasteless for it was meat of an old animal. The rolls were badly kneaded and hard, and boiled in rancid oil. The k'ang, on which the holy man slept was not heated enough. The holy man could not sleep a wink the whole night. Our k'ang is too short, the saintly man could not stretch out his noble legs. The felt spread on the k'ang was too thin, his holy limbs must be sore. We are a poor family and should like to offer a herd of sheep. We are ashamed to be only able to offer an old horse, saddled with a broken saddle. Our harvest this year was the worst we ever reaped, so we can afford only to offer a couple of sacks of rancid rolls. To add to our frustration, the wool of our sheep was so bad and short this year, that we can only offer a thin felt poorly prepared by an unskilled artisan. The butter we prepared for the lamas and the lamps is nearly all rancid. What we offer to you is more like a gift offered at a burial than a gift fit for these circumstances." Then the maternal uncle and the celebrant prostrate themselves, apologizing and presenting the scarf. The Living Buddha protests that he is very happy, and thanks the family for its prodigality, and promises his blessings.

At the moment of departure the family kneels with incense sticks in their joined hands at the gate of the courtyard; each of the assistant lamas receive two strings of cash, and the Living Buddha takes with him the packet of dollars. After him follow some youngsters with a beautiful horse, saddled with the finest saddle, and a precious rug upon it, with some animals carrying butter and tea for the lamas of the monastery, rolls, meat and sugar, and the news is spread all over the country that so and so offered such and such gifts with an unusual prodigality.

Poor families offer to the Living Buddha fifty strings of cash instead of a horse. The celebrant who belongs to a still poorer family goes at noon with his maternal uncle to the lamasery, in order to see a Living Buddha who performs the rites upon him and is presented with two strings of cash.[17]

This information was given me by several masters of ceremonies and Monguors who attended the rites, and had themselves performed them.

XIII. DEATH

In connection with the funeral customs of the Monguors, a few words should be said about their notions concerning the souls, because these have an important bearing upon the funeral customs.

[17] Schröder, *op. cit., Der Alters Segen*, 630.

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sion concerning this subject among the Monguors, who assume that they have three souls.

THE FIRST SOUL

The Monguors used to talk about the 'soul of the bones,[10] which seems to adhere to the bones in general, not to a definite bone. When the bones are broken or split, the soul seems not to be affected. Consequently, when Monguors kill a sheep, they do not take care to avoid the breaking of the bones. The soul seems never to leave the bones, even during life or after death; it is said to be buried with the bones in the grave, and to remain there adhering to them, and to vanish when the bones vanish. Never is it said that this soul harms people, or is harmed in anyway. However, when the shaman calls back the souls of a sick man supposed to be harmed by malignant spirits, or by souls of the deceased, the bone soul is called back with the two others.

This peculiar feeling existing over all Asia concerning the bones is noteworthy. The bones play a large role in the beliefs of the Mongol and Turkish people, to which stock the Monguors belong. The Monguors, as well as the Mongols and Turks, when asking for the name of a man's clan, ask for the name of his "bone," and their saying goes that the bones come from the father and the flesh from the mother. This basic principle is so deeply ingrained in their consciousness that when you ask a man or a woman what their bones are, they will always answer by giving the name of the clan of their father and not that of their mother. Everybody is recognized as belonging to the clan of his father. If you ask for the name of the bone of their mother, they will answer by giving the name of their mother's father's clan and not of their mother's mother's clan, for the bones come from the father. This behavior fits perfectly in the frame of a patriarchal society.

However, it is not known at what time specific facts caused the Monguors to go so far as to call their maternal uncle the "master of the bones" of the children of his sister, to acquiesce to his illogical usurpation of the most basic rights belonging to the family chief in a patriarchal society, to allow the maternal uncle to decide, in definite circumstances, about the life and death of these children, and to be their recognized avenger in case of suicide, caused by maltreatment, and to become the only man who can permit the burial of these children.[11] In all nomadic societies in Asia this intrusion is observed on a larger or smaller scale. Even in the Chinese society the maternal uncle plays an important role, presiding over the festivities at marriages and giving permission to bury the children of his sister. The Chinese saying is well known that, when the maternal uncle brings suit at court against the son of his sister, the father of the defendant cannot withstand it, and also the saying that as long as the mother's family (maternal uncle) does not permit burial, the de-

[10] Schröder, *op. cit.*, 2: 205.
[11] Schram, Part I: 91.

new beliefs have entered their minds. However, for how long a time will the existence of this soul last? Even though the lamas speak of a quasi-endless paradise with Buddha, and of successive rebirths, the Monguors honor the souls of only three older generations at the feast of spring, at the celebration of the family guardian deity, and at the time when shamans expel evil spirits from sick men. After that the souls seem to be finished.

The second soul seems to be more independent of the body than the first one, because, during sleep, dreaming, and fainting fits, it may wander to far-off countries, and later recall what it saw or heard, and how it acted in these countries. At the moment of death, the family, on the roof of the house, implores it not to leave them. The shaman, curing the sick, calls this soul back with the two others along the rope. Immediately after death, the lama releases this soul through the bregmatic fontenelle. Surely, threfore, this soul leaves the body after death.

However, its existence has always been precarious. During life it was subject to being harmed by nefarious spirits, and after death, lamas must say prayers to help it reach paradise safely, in order that vampires may not devour it on the way. In the same way, the shamans at the feast of spring tell about the dangerous crossing of the bridge after death, and about vampires waiting for these souls.[13]

Siberian shamans travel to heaven in order to bring back souls abducted by evil spirits.[14] The Tungus believe that the soul remains for a certain time near the body,[15] and then a dog carries it into the lower world;[16] that souls of dead people are supposed to eat dog meat,[17] and that a raven looks for the souls traveling, after death, to the lower world and brings the news to the soul's owner.[18] The release of the soul is a very important function of the shamans.[19]

The Monguors do not say in which part of the body the soul is located, or from where it originated. At the feast of spring, however, the shamans, when making fun, tell in a jocular manner how Tengri made seven men and seven women. The Tungus believe that the souls are given by the spirit;[20] they also say that the death of a man results in the birth of a new soul in the other (upper) world, and that the soul may be sent to a newborn human being.[21] Among the Ch'i-tan is recorded a sacrifice offered by the emperor in the tenth month, to the god of the sacred Black Mountain, who cares for the souls of the populace.[22]

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[13] Eliade, *op. cit.*, 191, 192.
[14] Hoffmann, *op. cit.*, 179.
[15] Shirokogoroff, *Psychomental complex*, 215.
[16] *Ibid.*, 210.
[17] *Ibid.*, 92.
[18] *Ibid.*, 142.
[19] *Ibid.*, 276.
[20] *Ibid.*, 128.
[21] *Ibid.*, 297.
[22] Wittfogel and Feng, *op. cit.*, 204–214.